



## MICHIGAN SNOWSPORTS INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

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May 12, 2013

The Honorable Hugh Crawford  
887 House Office Building  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909

Subject: HB 4692, to abolish the Ski Area Safety Board

Dear Rep. Crawford:

On behalf of Michigan's ski industry, I am writing to oppose House Bill 4692, introduced by Rep. McMillin and referred to the Committee on Regulatory Reform. If passed, this bill would dismantle the Ski Area Safety Board, which serves a vital role in the safety of skiers and snowboarders on Michigan's slopes and trails. Skiing/snowboarding is a \$4.2 billion industry in our state, and the number-one reason for recreational travel during Michigan's winters. On behalf of this vibrant industry, I ask you not to act on HB 4692, but rather keep it in committee.

HB 4692 is the result of a report issued by the Office of Regulatory Reinvention regarding occupational licensing. Page A-46 of that report reads in part as follows:

Scheduling board meetings, creating agendas and minutes, as well as staffing the occupational board meeting takes up valuable department staff time that could be best spent on other responsibilities. In the absence of an occupational board, the staff could seek input from industry leaders when necessary to determine appropriate regulations. ...the Ski Area Safety Board does not appear to provide any significant benefits to the regulation of the occupation that could not otherwise be accomplished with consultation with industry leaders.

The above recommendation maintains that the Ski Area Safety Board is expensive to operate. However, this is not true. The members of the board donate their time and for the past two years they weren't compensated for their travel expenses. The president of the Ski Area Safety Board creates the agenda so there is no expense to the state there either. The only expense that the state incurs is the cost of time by state employees to attend the meetings. Since there are usually five to seven state employees at each of the meetings, costs could be reduced by sending fewer state employees. Since the department offers this as the main reason for abolishing the board, we feel that the department needs to show some transparency and provide their actual costs.

The recommendation also states, "In the absence of an occupational board, the staff could seek input from industry leaders when necessary to determine appropriate regulations." The important issue here is the word "could." As the industry sees it, dismantling the Ski Area Safety Board would grant authority to one person in state government to decide issues that could adversely affect ski areas and skier safety.

The ORR report also maintains that the Ski Area Safety Board doesn't provide significant benefits to the regulation of the occupation. This is also untrue. The Ski Area Safety Board has provided necessary and vital services to our state. One important case in point happened in 2007 and 2008, when the Ski Area Safety Board made important changes to the Administrative Rules regarding the use of snowmobiles on ski slopes. After a tragic accident involving a snowmobile at Alpine Valley ski area, the Ski Area Safety Board worked in a timely manner to provide new rules to reinforce snowmobile safety on ski slopes and trails. At its next meeting, the Ski Area Safety Board accepted these new rules and passed a resolution that they submitted for adoption as part of its Administrative Rules.

Today, Michigan has the most stringent rules of snowmobile use on ski slopes in our country. This is a prime example of the results that can be achieved through cooperation between the Ski Area Safety Board and the department. The Board was able to meet with the public and fashion rules to protect skiers and the ski patrol at the same time.

Again, on behalf of the skiing public and ski industry, I ask you not to act on HB 4692 and keep the Michigan Ski Area Safety Board.

Sincerely,



Executive Director

cc: Members of the Michigan House of Representatives  
Members of the Michigan Senate